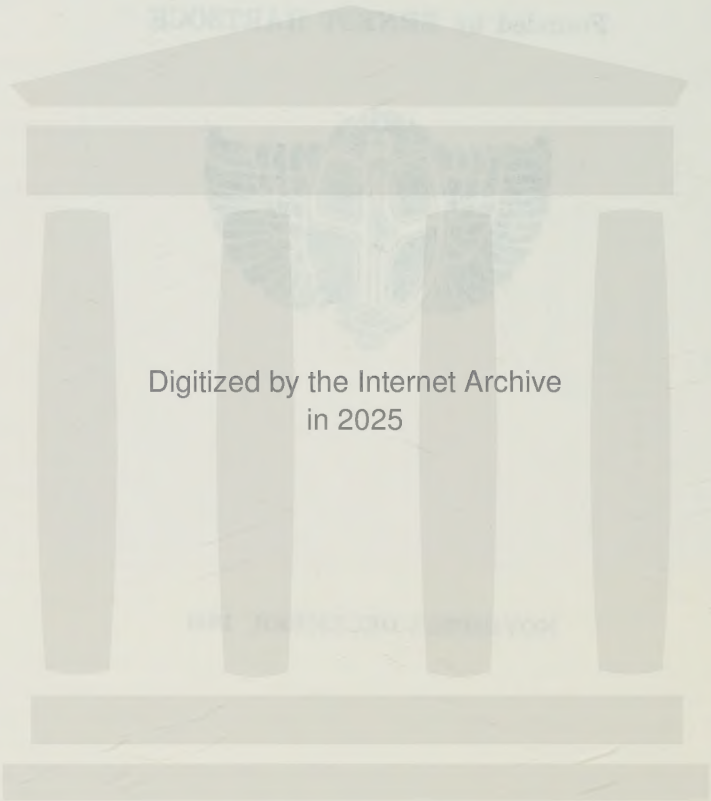
BOZART and Contemporary Verse

Combining JAPM *and The Oracle*

Founded by ERNEST HARTSOCK

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1931

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GEORGIA



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Founded by ERNEST HARTSOCK

THORNWELL JACOBS and JAMES E. ROUTH, *Editors*

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COW-BELLS

Through the trance of June's thick air
The cow-bells tinkle everywhere.

They do not come a single way
But mix with honey of the day.

They fit in with the rustling trees
And make allowance for the bees.

Yet they speak more for a man
Than the deepest church-bell can.

If love can find a way among
The carnivals where stars are hung,

If love can have a little hour
Between the aeons red with power,

It will be in such a sound
Love will likeliest be found.

For here is music hanging under
Necks as holy as the thunder.

Here is old awe proud to bend
Its neck and be a gentle friend.

—Robert P. Tristram Coffin

HAZARDOUS WAY

There may be a score of lovely girls
Who have known his intimate glance,
But now he is mine, may he ever go
As straight as the thrust of a lance.

For I have made his love a bridge
With which to span the years.
And if it break, I shall fall upon
A thousand terrible spears.

And I, whose life is a trumpet-song
That quickens the morning air,
Must walk alone in a world of sun
With darkness everywhere.

—Lucia Trent

RARE RESURRECTION

By years forgotten, now the graves are kept
By branches that, low-swinging to the ground,
Shiver their leaves a little if, inept,
Their roots steal through the marrow of each mound.
Beyond all doubt they were not glad to go.
Each, in his final hour of narrowing light
Recoiling vainly from a weird foe,
No moment dreamed that on a summer night

A firefly might stumble in the dark,
A phantom to his unaccustomed eyes;
Or some bird wake in loneliness, his stark
And sluggish ears to waken with its cries:
To hear again all life's incredible words
Mingled at dawning with the mirth of birds.

—Maud E. Uschold

MOTHS

Far thunder in the night,
  And moths around my bed.
I do not need to pray,
  For God is in my head.

I worship when I gaze
  Upon the tiny things
That feel God flow along
  Their curved and silver wings.

And when I love the moths
  Which yearn so for my light,
I have no need to hark
  To thunder in the night.

—Robert P. Tristram Coffin

CAIN ANSWERS

This were no new thing, that he should be favored,
He with the fat of rams offered as Payment—
Abel the comely, to Cain, the ill-savored,
Cain with the smell of earth still on his raiment!

This were no bitterness—choice twixt the two of us,
Though with all blessings, You added Your's to him—
Only, that morning, he lifted an eyebrow, thus—
Snickered behind his hand. Therefore, I slew him!

—Sara Henderson Hay

THE THORN

I asked God for a rose
Once in a prayer;
But soon, to my surprise, I had
A thorn to bear.

I felt He could have given
The rose as well;
I felt I needed more of heaven,
Not more of hell.

But later when the rose
Would have been dust,
I stabbed the tempter with the thorn
And saved my trust.

And then I understood,
To my surprise:
Roses are sometimes foolish gifts
And thorns are wise.

—Warren Ariail

BLUE BLOOD

These withered branches of a family tree
Have little left to nourish them but pride.
The glories that have passed away must be
The camouflage in which their egoes hide.
He speaks in praise of titled relatives,
And she of forbears who were Irish kings;
The style in which a distant cousin lives
Consoles them for a score of petty stings.
But they are growing elderly, and find
That life is wearing very thin in places.
They feel it when the landlord is inclined
To underestimate the social graces.
And as they see their patrimony waning,
The Irish kings seem less and less sustaining.

—Eleanor Glenn Wallis

HIGHER MATHEMATICS

The high wheel of heaven turns
With ten million shining urns,
A transcendent arc of light
In the interstellar night:

Flaming suns with fiery veils
Balance in their burning scales,
Spin their curves, and swinging come
By a radiant rule of thumb:

Starry patterns, starry laws,
Buried in the primal cause,
Marshall to the cold decree
Of a bright geometry.

The mathematics of the sky
Is frightening, when such as I
Cannot with impunity
Resolve the simple rule of three.

Wilfred J. Funk

O Heroes, brave Leanders, Abelards
And Heloises, love-engraved of fame;
You Parises, fair Helens whom old bards
Have wreathed with aureoles of splendid shame;
You, Egypt's queen and Roman Anthony,
Aspasia and proud Pericles; you great
Napoleon with your Josephine—can be
But drab my thread against your web of fate?

I who must sit each tranquil evening long,
My one man hid behind his paper screen,
And mend, or check the bills that may be wrong—
While listening to a dialog between
His favorite funsters . . . with unhearing ears—
Until my heart seeps through the sieve of years!

—Jo Hartman

THE SEA

Your thunderous dirges strike a chord in me,
For I was cradled by a gusty shore;
I followed ships until my eyes were sore,
And heard the sailors tell of treachery.
They called you devil, when their tongues were free,
Yet at the dawn their skiffs with sail and oar
Were scudding seaward; and the waters bore
The songs of men who hungered for the sea.

Beyond white breakers crashing endlessly,
Beyond the heaven's storm-distracted dome
Where cold fogs gather and the sea-gulls shriek,
There dwells a silence, a serenity;
And they who dare the Titans of the foam
Tremble, but hold the secret when they speak.

—Ignace M. Ingianni

FRUGAL BOARD

Feign a coldness if you must;
Draw a shade across your eyes;
I still have my little crust
When I take you by surprise.

Watch your frugal board, my love,
When I come where it is spread,
Rebel longing gives me of
Your wine and meat and bread.

—Lillah A. Ashley

ETCHING

The woods were heavy with late-fallen rain
That dripped, and dripped again,
In passionless refrain.
Light from the western sky
Streamed on wet leaves, and high
Above the broken dripping of the rain,
Birds sang, in maddening, sweet, uplifted strain,
As I
With stumbling steps went by,
My heart hot-seared with pain.
Always, though sunsets flame, grow dim, and die,
I will remember . . . sky
Of liquid gold, and singing birds, and pain;
And under all, the dripping of the rain.

—Carrie Fall Benson

SAD CONSEQUENCE

I used verse-making for a buffer
To shield me from my thought,
And now I neither think nor suffer
As I ought.

—Lucile Enlow

GARDENER

His twisted hands have toiled for sixty years
But still they dabble in the garden mold;
And seasons are familiar words retold,
The only news the old man ever hears.
His youth, perhaps, dreamed riches and careers
But now the summer sun is all his gold,
And life, a watching as the springs unfold
The loveliness for which his mind still peers.

He marks the year's slow glamour in the sky;
He is not close to any human thing
And does not care or even note the dearth.
The years are slower, slower passing by....
Some year when autumn gives small hope of spring
He will go back, in gladness to the earth.

—Gerald Raftery

TO EROS

Urchin of capricious antics,
  Gurgling with malicious glee,
What deluded, fond romantics
  Sponsored your divinity?

All the poets who acclaim you
  Petted god or evil sprite
Alternately praise and blame you
  For your undisputed might.

Who would choose to give you honor,
  Mischievous, destructive boy,
Rendering the foolish donor
  Twice more wretchedness than joy!

Ravisher of every season,
  Harbinger of deepest woe,
Is there any earthly reason
  You should be desired so?

—Olive E. Darling

THE BAKER

He measures eggs and butter, milk and flour,
And beats staccato tunes in yellow crocks,
His face as noncommital as a clock's,
His hands in steady rhythm, hour on hour.
But when he plans the frosting of a cake,
Some special bit that truly tries his skill,
He stays past closing time and works at will,
For then his artist spirit is awake.

His patterns are as delicately clear
As etchings on a winter window pane,
A latticed gate, two snow birds flying near,
Brittle beauty in a wreathed refrain.
Some dreams are wrought in marble, some in words,
And some in crystal leaves and sugar birds.

—Lida Wilson Turner

CASCADES

Cascades of spirea descend in spring,
Foam-white, to fresh-green levels of young grass,
But now that delicately branching mass
Of fine brown twigs displays a crystal thing,
A myriad of shining balls, a-swing,
Hung there by warm, slow rain. The light winds pass
On tiptoe, for these berries, frail as glass,
Are transient fruits that mild Decembers bring.

The winter storms will step with heavy stride
Between the trees and build a mound of snow.
South winds will come to brush the snow aside
Where crystal berries hung in row on row.
South winds will warm the branches till they run
Foam-white and broad, cascading in the sun.

—Florida Watts Smyth

CARFARE

"How came you here?" the ferryman inquired;
"For time itself, I think has died since last
A single soul has hailed me and desired
A river passage."

His voice trembled, aghast
In the vast loneliness which locked the shore,
Scummed with green algae, through which his barge had poled
A thinning track where none had been before....
"Can you not speak?" ... Angry but now more bold,
He cried again, "Can you not speak?"—then saw
About the other's mouth a dirty rag.

"Come down!" he said, and watched the stranger claw
His way across the rotten wharf and drag
His body down the ladder to the boat.
"Your hands are tied together! Gagged and bound!"
His aged fingers fumbled at the throat
And wrists, and picked the knots which they had found.
A piece of money rang upon the floor.
Hoarsely the stranger spoke: "Carfare!" he cried.
"They left me carfare!" Half-dazed, he sobbed and swore,
Marking the ferryman grope at his side,
Retrieve the coin by dropping on his knee,
And pocket it. "Well, take it as your pay,
But look the trip is worth it! Now, let's see—
What is your name, old crow? Mine's Spike DuLay."

Dream-struck, the old man paused. A breeze came chill.
"Charon!" defiantly he shouted. "Charon still!"

—Arthur H. Nethercot

DEFENSELESS

I closed my mind against the thought of you;
My heart against your face, your very name.
But when sleep held me prisoner, you came
Into my dreams, looked in my eyes—*and knew.*

—Louise Crenshaw Ray

SYMPHONY

Let me love you after my own fashion,
Gustily, with all the passion
Of a thousand half-remembered years
Of unspent ardour, all the tears
That I have held in store. Yet, more,
Give all myself, till in the giving I shall find
Myself, and give the mute, unlettered tongue
Words for the melodies my soul has sung;
Sweet sounds; till our joint harmonies shall make
Hope for the world, and harmony in human shape.
We shall touch pain; too well that law I know;
But if in our own suffering we shall grow
Full-statured, shall we note the minor key,
Or even hear it, in the rising symphony?

—Hillary Hudson

HERITAGE

His wary eyes have learned to guard the pain
That was bequeathed him with his golden skin
And finely chiselled lips. The lad will win
What fate allows him, curb the wilder strain
Of his dark blood, and glorify the stain
Of color, wearing beauty bitterly. The sin
Of his begetting curves his amber chin
To arrogance, inevitably vain.

He walks remotely with a shadowed grace,
And we, beholding him, may call him cold,
Who waits in quietness to realize
An aching, brief obilvion to race.
Life has drawn blood too early. As the gold
Young moon, he is mysteriously wise.

—Dorothy Garrett

A GOD IN LOVE

Listen to what I am saying:
This is a song mounting skyward, this is a love.
This is a love new born and full blooming;
Articulate with savage beauty and a clear white singing,
Such as a young wind passing over the lake with a mating loon.
Such as many little winds running through the white birch forest.
This is a love sworn to by this pulse flaming,
By this heart fever, by these secret veins afire.
It is this reckless cavorting heart—
A bird loosed into hungry air.
It is mad music poised in the ear of listening light.

What matter if you are now away?
It is but the sun gone for a little while to sleep.
It is the faun seeking the shade of the whistling cool river.
It is the loon at high noon retreating
To the leaning rushes from the over-zealous heart.

And so I have not thrust one tear away;
I have not cowled the remembering heart;
No, nor have I burned rag-weed at this living altar.
No, not even have I plucked one single hair in fabled anguish.
I am become a God!

Tonight
I will rise and climb the upthrust hill
And walk thereon—
On the high singing hill handclasped with the child wind,
And I shall be walking with you.
I shall throw myself on the emerald grasses;
The earth shall be as your breathing form,
And I will lie beside you breast to breast...
Tonight, when dreams dance naked on the grasses.

—Harold Lincoln Kerr

SIGN FOR AUTUMN WOODS

If you can bear
The sudden silence
After a lush pear falls,
If you can see the python
Coiled where the grapevine was,
And still be calm,
Then autumn cannot hurt you.
Enter here.
But if you stop,
And listen to the tinkling
Of the woodman's ax far up the hill,
Or if you even faintly hear
The hounds and hunter
In the grey below,
Autumn will have you
And will keep you—so.

—Bradford White

OUTLINE

All history since Adam's fall
Is scanted ceremonial.

The makers and destroyers go,
And a rehearsal is the show.

Garlands alike, however planned,
Wilt from the laxed or upraised hand.

The bleeding and the dancing feet
Tread in a pattern incomplete.

And what the ritual should be,
Is only soul's half memory.

—Harriett Brownell

LURE

The woods are calling to me from afar.
I hear their leafy murmur in the night.
I sense gaunt pine trees clutching at a star,
While young shrubs huddle, shivering with fright.
I hear a dryad clamoring from her tree,
And, like a muffled tom-tom, far and faint,
Upon pine-needle carpets, wild and free,
The dance of goat hoofs loosed from all restraint.
The leaping shadow of an antic faun
Goes with me through the lighted city street,
And forestward my truant thoughts are drawn
By happy echoes of his cloven feet.
This occult summons may not be withstood.
Night, earth and spring are calling from the wood.

—Joseph Upper

OUR LOVE IS OLDER THAN WE

Our hearts were pledged to much before our blood began its racing!
However lover-warm or virgin-cool, they're owned by a number!—
Our ears attuned to calls before our parents' first embracing.
Oh, there are names of merely towns that shake me bright from slumber!

Since we inherit fealties that bloom as we are wiser
And even tamest drudges yet remain most wild romancers,
I cherish you the more as I become a memory-miser.
I needed you, my love—and needs have always found their answers.

—Ralph Cheyney

BROKEN WINGS

He never questioned journeys, checks nor dimes,
Nor gave her legal reason to complain,
But yet he looked away from her at times
As though he never cared to look again.

She envied birds their broken wings—their fall;
Even brutality she coveted.
"For me to be always outside his wall
Beating my drum—is worse than death," she said.

—Myrna Louise Armstrong

DIALOGUE

(John Baptist—Salome)

"Her eyes are cold-green
Liked the fixed eyes of serpents."

"His eyes are strange far
places I shall never see."

"Her hair is a nest
of winding, gold-bronzed adders."

"His hair is night-fire
on a mountain of white stone.
His brows and his beard
are black leopards of Asia."

"Her breasts are vipers coiled,
whose rosy mouths are death."

"His breasts are a shield
studded with round, pink rubies."

"Her waist is a cobra,
her thighs slim, ivory pythons."

"His form is a rough
ashler, a marble column.
His thighs are silver oaks;
I shall know their strong boughs."

"I shall destroy her
and her womb that is fertile."

"I shall hold him in my arms,
that are gold pythons.
I shall bruise his lips,
my kisses shall burn his mouth,
and my throat feel his quick breath."

"I shall destroy her,
and the poisoned seed therein
shall be dispersed and perish."

—John Lee Higgins

DISILLUSION

I had forgot the world could be
So white, so still, so strange a place,
That moonlight could so frost a tree
With webs of silver lace.

I had forgot what utter peace
Can lie on field and road and hill
When weary hearts have found release,
And restless winds are still.

Oh, bar the door, and draw the shade
On what I cannot bear to see
And think what bitter years have made,
And yet may make, of me.

—Hilda Rose Stice

EXEMPLAR

Her feet are planted on the solid ground;
Her ears deny your bold fanfaronade;
She sees the plumed parade go round and round
And quietly takes up her broom and spade:
She sets her candle on the window ledge,
To warn familiar ghosts and shadow selves
She has forgot the scent of hawthorn hedge
And has no trafficking with naughty elves.

Her ears were tipped and tufted once, you say,
Her self aware of changes in the moon?
Now she's no thought of tangent interplay,
Nor dream of crested winds above the dune.
No feather lifts her eyes nor any fife,
Her bedroom mirror shows "some-good-man's-wife."

—Isabel McLennan McMeekin

REPLY

I heard your whisper, "Let us run
Before the thrust of their sharp lance;
They would compel us, every one,
To join their ancient, useless dance."

But best to run? Ah, better dance,
And laugh behind our elfish masks,
Than, running, we should ever chance
To spill the wine from precious casks.

Then we could drink in some dark spot
Where jack-o'-lanterns never glance;
And softly laugh about our plot
While all the others only dance.

—Louis L. Hasley

THE GRAY RETURN

I shall break in upon your thought some day,
    Insistent and demanding. You shall see
    How full of speech the voiceless dead can be
Whom you had thought securely laid away.
You shall discover with a cold dismay,
    Though death dissolves all tissues skillfully,
    The features keep their sharp integrity
For those who learn their dead can curse—and stay.

I shall invade your closest-guarded place
    To find you seeming-safe from chill surprise,
        All unaware of stark approaching pain.
Then as slow anguish settles on your face
    And a sick grimace hardens in your eyes,
        My thin gray lips will say, "I shall remain."

—Laurence Pratt

PASTURE ON PARNASSUS

By Robert Leseur Jones

Wings Against the Moon, by Lew Sarett (Henry Holt and Company, New York. $2.00).

If with *Slow Smoke* Lew Sarett reached the front rank of American poets, then *Wings Against the Moon,* with the artistic fidelity and the startling beauty of its Indian poetry, will reassure him of his prominence. In this fourth volume, there are weak places, spots that are, for various reasons, impeachable and unimportant, but the book in general finds easy justification in its "Water Drums," the Indian section, and in "Voyageurs and Lumberjacks," a section the contents of which are made obvious by the title. The sheer beauty of the diction is alone sufficient compensation for the reader, but the fresh material, garnered from a rich store of experiences in Northwestern lumber camps and in Canadian backwoods, will prove especially appetizing to those surfeited with conventional subject matter. Some of the poems in the fore part of the book should not be in the society of the best in the volume because of their lack of pungency and technical finish, although the poems, judged collectively are fairly uniform in quality. Lew Sarett, if his poetry lives, will be known for his Indian poems, and some of his finest are included in *Wings Against the Moon.*

Pregnant Woman in a Lean Age, by Ralph Cheyney (William Faro, Inc., New York. $1.50).

This is a book that the puritan should avoid, lest his asceticism be invalidated, and a book that is to be kept from the bigot, lest he miscontrue or contaminate its meaning. The title may be misleading at first, but the initial poem will dispel any doubt as to the probity of the author. In *Pregnant Woman in a Lean Age,* Ralph Cheyney has written an explicit and mature defense of sex in its finer aspect. Sometimes daring, though never for the sake of mere audacity, he has widened the hemisphere, and re-emphasized the dignity, of sex as an impeccable factor in life. From the standpoint of argument and philosophy, these poems are concise and coherent and, in some respects, representative of the best work of which the author is capable. But argument is hardly concomitant with poetry, and viewed as poetry, this book does not reach great heights, although it has tech-

nical sufficiency and several passages of genuine intensity. It is to be expected that all will not agree with the author's vindications, but the sensible reader, whatever his views, will nevertheless appreciate the sincerity and integrity which have motivated Cheyney in handling the parlous theme of this book.

He Who Rides the Sky, by Eliot Kays Stone (Poetry Publishers, Philadelphia, Pa. $2.00).

He Who Rides the Sky is replete with poems that fall just short of eminence because the author is unfortunately handicapped by an inability to modernize his technique. Almost great enough to offset such discrepances as his style possesses, however, are his significant themes, which are handled with skill. A few of his poems, characterized by overstatement, are of definite Victorian vintage, although we find Stone ostensibly experimenting and dealing with fresh material in most of his work. Some of his forms are original and effective, and his rhythms pleasing, except when he employs, as in "When the Master Paints His Pictures in the Deserts of the West," a superfluous and artificial one. Eliot Kays Stone writes with vigor, virility, and perception, and his work sometimes possesses remarkable poignancy and phrase beauty; but in a final analysis, his poetry is hampered by archaisms of style that will prove objectionable to the modern reader.

The Signature of Pain, by Alan Porter (The John Day Company, New York).

It is indisputable that Alan Porter's verse merits much of the laudatory comment heaped upon it by English critics, although it is obvious that *The Signature of Pain* has been the victim of a suspicious jubilee of praise. The poems lack emotional clarity and are characterized by sauvity rather than by intensity. Porter's love verses, marred by traditional observations and prognostications, are likely to stop in the throat, although the piece from which the book takes its title is notable. The indigenous conservatism of the author is a restraining hand when he would adventure beyond the picket fence of conventionality, this suppression probably presaging the dilution of the poems. The outstanding virtues of the book are its original diction and its intellectual attainment. Impaired by tepidity and at times antiquated, this book nevertheless reveals promise in its author, who gives notice of good work to come.

Selected Poems, by Benjamin Musser (Henry Harrison, New York. $2.00).

There are poets who have greater power, who are more sensitive and more economical, and who devise with greater care and perception than Benjamin Musser, but it is he who has been published probably

more widely than any other poet. His *Selected Poems*, which contains work from his seven individual volumes and from two of which he is co-author, credits seventy-four poetry and general magazines, twenty-one newspapers, and forty-eight anthologies from which his poems are reprinted. The most interesting selections are from *Untamed* and *Dipped in Aloes*. It is to be regretted that only a few poems from the latter volume have found their way into Musser's collected verse. *Dipped in Aloes*, though trenchant, and bitter, and generally unpleasant, is filled with vivid, well-wrought work that is valuable because of its basic truth. "Address to a Great Public Servant," one of the author's finest poems, is missing, but "Stoned," another fine poem, is included in this volume of selected verse.

FOR SHAME!

See how the winter woods
Stand austere with trees
Like grim old monks
Brooding on mysteries;
Pointing their shrivelled fingers
At the white birch that lingers
Nimble and nymph-nude,
A moonbeam hypnotized—
That danced for the devil—
Rooted to the spot
Of last night's revel.

—CHARLES DIVINE

Contributors To This Issue

Lucia Trent, one of our foremost women poets, and Ralph Cheyney, her husband, are editors of *Contemporary Vision,* Philadelphia. Robert P. Tristram Coffin, a frequent contributor to our pages, is a widely-published poet of New York. Maude E. Uschold resides at Lacon, Ill. Sara Henderson Hay is a promising young poet of Anniston, Ala. Warren Ariail lives in Camden, S. C. Wilfred J. Funk is owner of the *Literary Digest.* Eleanor Glenn Wallis is a poet of Baltimore, Md. Ignace M. Ingianni writes from Jamaica, L. I. The work of Jo Hartman, of San Francisco, is finding frequent publication. Lillah A. Ashley resides at Glens Falls, N. Y. Myrna Louise Armstrong lives in Morgantown, W. Va. Gerald Raftery's home is in Elizabeth, N. J. Olive E. Darling writes from Cleveland, Ohio. Lucile Enlow lives in Decatur, Ga., and Lida Wilson Turner is a resident of Atlanta, Ga. Florida Watts Smyth, of St. Louis, Mo., is a poet finding wide publication in the better magazines. Arthur H. Nethercot is the author of *Abraham Cowley: The Muse's Hannibal.* Louise Crenshaw Ray is a popular Alabama poet. Hillary Hudson's home is Denver, Colo. Dorothy Garrett is a resident of Birmingham, Ala. Harold Lincoln Kerr writes to us from Chicago. Bradford White lives in Chapel Hill, N. C. Harriett Brownell is a frequent contributor to our pages. Joseph Upper is a prominent member of the Washington, D. C., group of poets. Carrie Fall Benson is a librarian of La Grange, Ga. John Lee Higgins is another Washington, D. C., poet. Hilda Rose Stice is a resident of Urbana, Ill. Louis L. Hasley's home is in Notre Dame, Ind. Laurence Pratt is a Portland, Ore., poet. Isabel McLennan McMeekin writes from Louisville, Ky. And Charles Divine lives in New York, N. Y.

The fifth line of Irene Wilde's poem, "Singular," in the September-October *Bozart,* should have read: "The lonely are most alone. . . ."

$25 Bi-Monthly Award

The twenty-five dollar award offered for the best poem in the September-October issue of *Bozart and Contemporary Verse* is hereby made to H. Raynesford Mulder for his "Divinity of Dust." Twenty-five dollars is awarded to the author of the best poem in each issue of *Bozart.*